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ABSTRACT

Designed to assist those who advise or counsel students at all levels of education, especially those who work with students in high school, community and junior colleges, vocational technical schools, four year colleges, universities, and graduate programs, the fact sheet presents strategies for helping people with disabilities take advantage of expanding opportunities in postsecondary education, career options, and life choices. Strategies include: (1) encouraging students to assess strengths and potentials, (2) providing non-restrictive career counseling, (3) encouraging students to base postsecondary decision-making on a variety of criteria, and (4) assuring access to the environment for counseling. There follows a brief description of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program--a nationwide program for assisting disabled people to enter the job market--and the Association on Handicapped Student Services in Postsecondary Education (AHSSPE)--a national organization of leaders in the field of providing services to disabled college students. A list of AHSSPE members and a brief annotated bibliography are also included. (LH)

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# STRATEGIES FOR ADVISING DISABLED STUDENTS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

by

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EC 165 111

American Council on Education
Washington, DC

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HEATH RESOURCE CENTER
a program of the American Council on Education

Higher Education and the Handicapped Resource Center — a national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for disabled people • One Dupont Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C. 202/833-4707 (Voice/TTY)

# STRATEGIES FOR ADVISING DISABLED STUDENTS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

## INTRODUCTION

### Times Have Changed

Opportunities are expanding for postsecondary education, career options, and life choices for people with disabilities. Legislation, such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) and the Rehabilitation Act (especially Section 504), and the growing awareness of disabled people and their advocates require that stereotypes be reexamined. American campuses have made great progress towards making education a reality for qualified disabled students.

This fact sheet has been designed to assist those who advise or counsel students at all levels of education, but especially those who work with students in high school, community and junior colleges, vocational technical schools, four year colleges, universities, and graduate programs. Counselors with Rehabilitation Services and Veterans Services as well as educational brokers will also find this material helpful in light of the curent increase in program and facility accessibility on today's American campuses.

### Disabled Students Today

People who, by birth, illness, or accident do not have use of one or more of life's functions are disabled. The term "functional limitation" describes the impairment of vision, hearing, mobility, voice, or information processing regardless of cause. Some people have a disability which is obvious—such as one who moves about in a wheelchair. Others may have a hidden functional limitation—such as a person with low vision or a low endurance threshold. With the expansion of opportunities mentioned above, it is crucial that a disabled student be encouraged to develop his/her abilities, examine life choices, career options, and educational programs so that he/she can maximize potential and become an independent person. Advisors and counselors can help by providing clients with their own best practices while keeping in mind the strategies identified below.

## STRATEGIES

### Encourage Students to Assess Strengths and Potentials

Students need to develop and assess academic, social, and personal strengths and potentials. All students, including those with disabilities, can do so by following these suggestions:

- Take courses in many disciplines: arts, science, math, vocational/technical subjects—exclude none because of disability.
- Explore life experiences by trying a variety of school activities, social functions, volunteer and paid jobs.
- Develop personal skills such as problem solving, decision making, and disability management.

Books and pamphlets readily available in the library or on display in the office about the topics which follow are especially useful for those, particularly disabled students, whose social experience may be limited:

social relationships
career options
sexuality
educational choices
civil rights
independent living
availability and management of personal assis-
asistance and assistive devices

Workshop or seminars which include both able bodied and disabled students on such topics as assertiveness, communication skills, and life choices can benefit all concerned.

### Provide Non-Restrictive Career Counseling

All students, including those with disabilities, need advice about career choices which is based on the student's abilities, skills, motivations as well as on a realistic picture of today's job market. Guidance toward stereotypical occupational goals and incomplete information should be avoided. Em-

*A project funded by the U.S. Department of Education*

phasis on the following ideas will lead to non-restrictive career counseling:

- realistic information about employment trends in current and future job market
- accurate information about educational and certification requirements
- examples of coping strategies and adaptations used by successful disabled people working in various careers
- decision-making based on aptitude, interest, and ability

### Encourage Students to Base Postsecondary Decision-Making on a Variety of Criteria

Encourage student to understand his/her needs and to negotiate accommodations with prospective college administrators to determine the best choice among several possibilities. The criteria below should be considered in the order of importance as listed.

- training available: field of study, reputation, diversity and size of student body, intellectual and social environment
- cost: family or third party contribution, availability of financial aid, work-study or cooperative education opportunities, scholarships/internships.
- auxiliary aids and accessibility· quality and type of support services appropriate for student's disability

### Assure Access to the Environment for Counseling

Above all, handicapped people are especially aware of attitude. Students' progress will be enhanced by the counselor's positive, supportive attitude—one which focuses on the abilities not the disabilities of the students. Positive attitudes can be conveyed by being sure that:

- The physical environment of the guidance office or setting is accessible to all clients.
- Information is publicized about how appropriate accomodations can be made by prior arrangement by a student whose disability precludes using the regular facility, or who relies on alternative modes of communication.
- Alternative modes of communication might include the presence of an interpreter, parent, or Rehabilitation Services counselor; or use of an adaptive device such as a speech board or TTY (telecommunications device).
- Communication with a disabled student takes place by looking and talking directly to the student/client, not the third party or aid.

There may be times during advising situations when confidentiality becomes an issue. After establishing rapport, even though a third party seems necessary for communication, inform the student/client that the presence of a third party is optional and that at least some of the interview should be between advisor and student alone. Counselor can suggest various ways to accomplish the dialogue:

- Request parent or Rehabilitation Services Counselor to wait outside and meet at a certain time.
- Suggest communication by writing (or using assistive device) instead of through an interpreter.

Before making any arrangements, or when in doubt, ASK THE STUDENT. He/she may have given the matter thought and can suggest a simple, inexpensive adaptation to the regular situation.

## RESOURCES

### These Selected Resources May Help Implement the Strategies Above

Vocational Rehabilitation—A nationwide program for assisting disabled people to enter the job market is the state-federal program, Vocational Rehabilitation. Any person is eligible whose disability threatens continued employment, interferes with employability, or disrupts function as homemaker. According to vocational rehabilitation guidelines, the disability must be physical or mental and applicants must have a "reasonable chance of being employable following rehabilitation service."

The Vocational Rehabilitation program is an *eligibility* program, rather than an *entitlement* program. States participating in the rehabilitation program have been mandated by legislation to emphasize the delivery of services to the most severely handicapped individuals. The priority mandated to severely handicapped individuals affects the eligibility process.

The scope and quality of services vary from state to state, but certain services must be offered by every office without charge and regardless of income. These are:

- evaluation of rehabilitation potential
- counseling, guidance, and referral services
- placement and post-employment followup

Vocational Rehabilitation offices may be found in most cities. To find the VR agency in your area look first under the State listings in your telephone book or contact the HEATH Resource Center for a copy of your "State Agencies Responsible for Postsecondary Education."

AHSSPPE—Association on Handicapped Student Services in Postsecondary Education—is the na-

tional organization of leaders in the field of providing support services to disabled college students. Information sharing is a key element of their goal which is to upgrade the quality of services to disabled students. Member services include annual conference, newsletter, and resource referral. Contact Jane Jarrow, Executive Director, AHSSPPE, P.O. Box 21192, Columbus, Ohio 43221. AHSSPPE members listed below have had extensive experience advising disabled students and have agreed to be a resource for counselors and advisors with particular questions.

Rubin Russell, Lic. Psychol.
Director of HDC Services
Northern Essex Community College
Haverhill, MA. 01830
(617) 374-0721 ext. 267
(617) 373-1720 (TDD)

Linda Donnels, Director
Services for Students with Disabilities
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Services for Disabled Students
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Columbia, SC 29208
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Special Projects
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Washington University Box 1135
St. Louis, MO 63130
(314) 889-5970

Ron Blosser, Director
Specialized Student Services
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
(618) 453-5738

Lynn M. Smith
P.O. Box 2154
Bellingham, WA 98225
(206) 384-0986

Jay Brill
University of Wyoming
Box 3808 University Station
Laramie, WY. 82071
(307) 766-6189

Cindy Kolb, Director
Disabled Student Services
San Francisco State Univ.
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA. 94132
(415) 469-2472

*Career Counseling and Job Placement of Disabled Students at Two-Year Colleges: A Guide*, Jay Watkins, Editor, 1979. The Guide presents a sampling of concepts, experiences, activities, and resources contributed by practitioners at colleges throughout the country. Available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA. 22210. #187352. $15.00 plus $2.22 postage for book or $1.09 for microfiche.

*The College Connection*, by Zola Dincin Schneider and Betty Cood Edelson is a 96 page handbook for college bound students. It contins examples of both able bodied and disabled students going through the steps necessary for selecting a college. Single copies are available for $3.25 to the College Connection, Box 4102, Chevy Chase, MD 20015.

*Counseling the Handicapped Client: A Series of Training Modules*, Developed by the American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1982. Modules include developing positive attitudes, counseling strategies, communicating with parents, mainstreaming, ard career guidance of handicapped students. An extensive resource list is included. The price is $6.00 for members of APGA, $7.00 for non-members. Prepay Professional Information Service, American Personnel and Guidance Association, 2 Skyline Place, Suite 400, 5203 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041. (703) 820-4700.

*Guidance, Counseling, and Suport Services for High School Students with Physical Disabilities*, by June Foster, et. al., (1978), Technical Education Research Centers (TERC). The 457 page comprehensive sourcebook covers in detail most aspects of advising disabled students. Available for $15.00 from TERC, 44 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

*1980-81 Rehabfilm Catalogue* is a 29 page annotated listing of 91 films and videotapes from around the world relating to the handicapped. Each title has undergone a rigorous review process. Free by request from Catalogue, C2, Rehabfilm, 20 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018.

HEATH Resource Center will send you by request single copies of any of the following selected materials:

*1982-83 HEATH Resource Directory*—Summarizes the 504 Regulation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as it applies to postsecondary institutions and lists over 70 national resources.

"Are You Looking for Information About Postsecondary Education?" is an annotated listing of 30 books and pamphlets selected to answer questions young disabled persons may have about future choices.

"Looking for Ways to Serve Disabled Students More Effectively?" contains an annotated and in-

formed selection of 30 books, pamphlets and papers which are directed to professionals.

*Technical Assistance Corps Directory* contains the names and addresses of over 130 persons selected and trained by Project HEATH to have expertise in access to campus facilities and programs for handicapped students. The names are listed by state for ease of reference.

In addition, the Center has fact sheets and packets about a number of topics which are of concern to postsecondary education for disabled persons. Contact the Center for copies of materials listed above, for response to particular inquiries, and to receive the quarterly newsletter, "Information from HEATH."

Compiled by Rhona C. Hartman with advice and encouragement from Cindy Kolb, (AHSSPPE), Linda Donnels (George Washington University), and Jane Howard-Jasper (American Personnel and Guidance Association). August 1981, reprinted January 1983.

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